

It's Never Too Late To Own Your Future—From Renter to Homeowner at 65

Outline of Need:

Saundra Dudley, age 65, lived on a fixed income. Paying rent each month felt like a real “drain” on her finances as she watched dollars vanish into rent instead of being invested into a home that she could own. Dudley hassled with needed apartment repairs and high noise levels at all hours. Living alone, she wished to have the option of having a pet for companionship but would have to pay a \$300 deposit in order to have that opportunity. Saundra was determined to leave the “rent world”.

How Rural Development Helped:

Due to Dudley's limited income, a commercial loan was not possible. She learned of USDA Rural Development's housing program from a friend who had purchased a home through USDA. USDA Rural Development partnered with Southeast Nebraska Affordable Housing Council (SENAHC) and Lincoln Action Program (LAP) to help Dudley purchase and repair a home of her own. USDA Rural Development provided a \$41,300 loan, SENAHC loaned \$8,000 to be repaid when home is sold, and LAP granted \$2,605. Home repairs included new shingles, gutters, downspouts, entry doors, and windows. Additionally, the basement floor joints were insulated, carpet removed, and electrical work completed. A surround tub, bathroom sink, bathroom and side entry vinyl flooring, smoke detectors, and foundation wall braces were installed.

“I had a dream for that “perfect little house” and with help from USDA Rural Development, Southeast Nebraska Affordable Housing Council, Lincoln Action Program and friends, my dream began and my nightmare of renting ended!” stated Dudley. “I am in control of my environment. I have peace of mind knowing that the time, effort and money which I put into my home will produce me a return.”

Dudley home before repairs.



Dudley home after repairs.



The Results:

Enjoying her home in Wahoo, Dudley keeps busy in her backyard flower garden. One day she may even have a pet enjoying the yard with her. Dudley's story demonstrates what partnering can accomplish, the importance of investing in a home and that it is never too late to own your future.

Dudley's tips for those seeking rural homeownership on a limited income?

“Take classes on types of loans available. Exchange talents with your friends for painting, wallpapering, etc. in exchange for babysitting, cleaning or lawn mowing. Use some “elbow grease”—water, soap and paint can do miracles. Network with your friends for landscaping flowers and shrubs—as they thin their gardens, you can create yours and then pass on to others in need. Be creative!” stated Dudley.